

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

# London Early Years Campaign

Information Session– 12 October 2018

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## Improving Early Years in London

In his manifesto, the Mayor pledged to “make childcare more affordable and accessible with a strategy that delivers for business and workers.

This means:

### **Children to have better outcomes**

- Children to learn well in the early years so they are ready for school

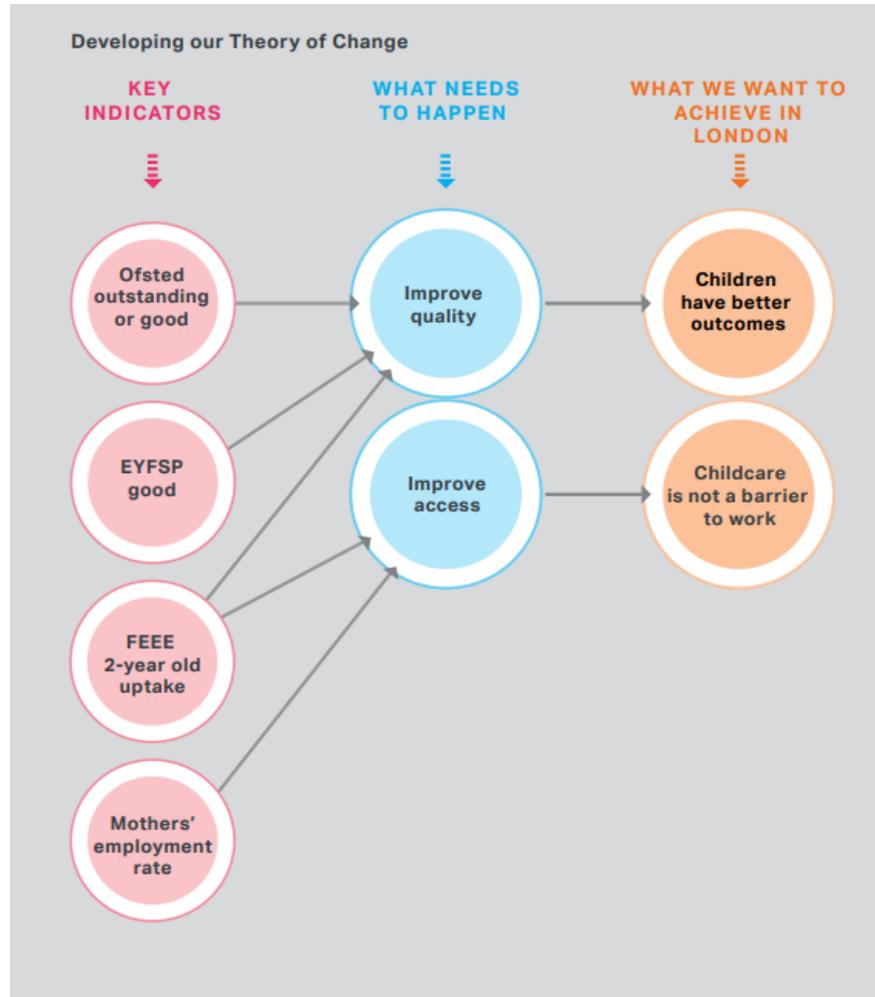
### **Childcare to not be a barrier to work**

- Families to have higher incomes because parents are able to work
- Employers to be able to find skilled and reliable staff, because parents are not locked out of the labour market by childcare costs

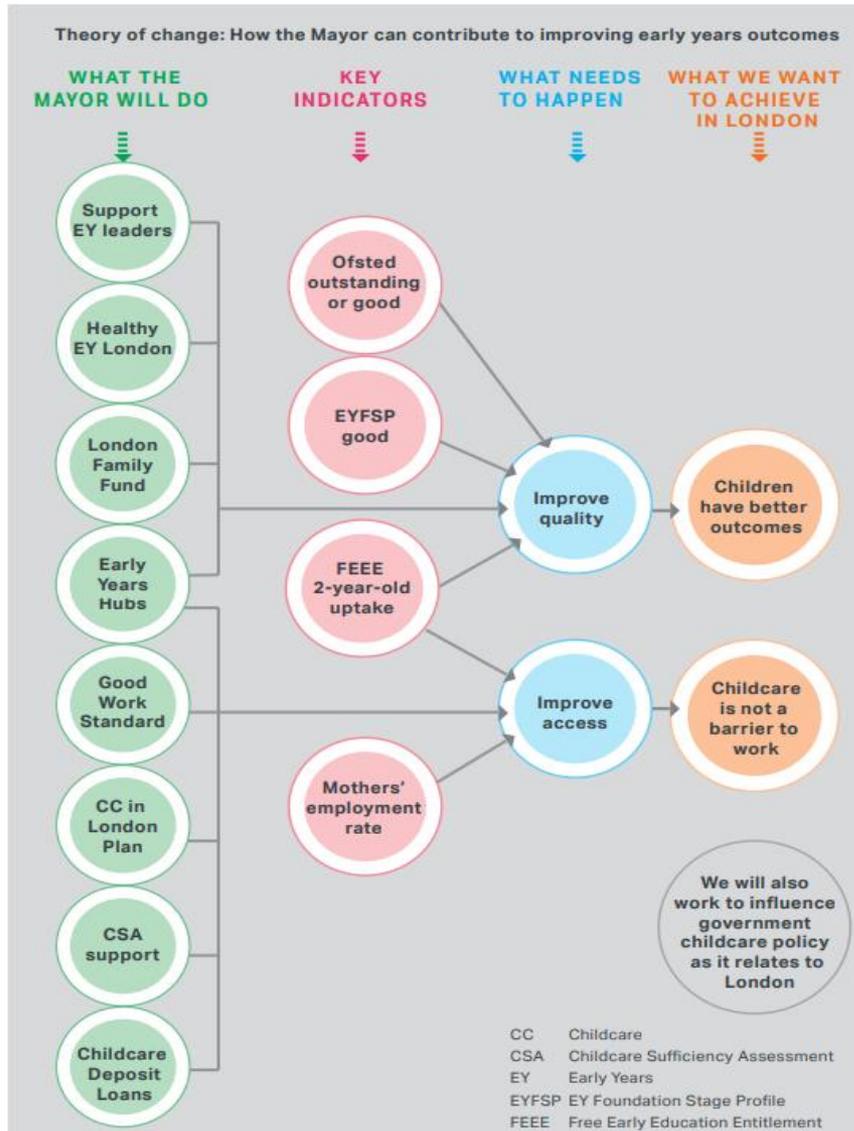


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## Theory of change



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## London Early Years Campaign

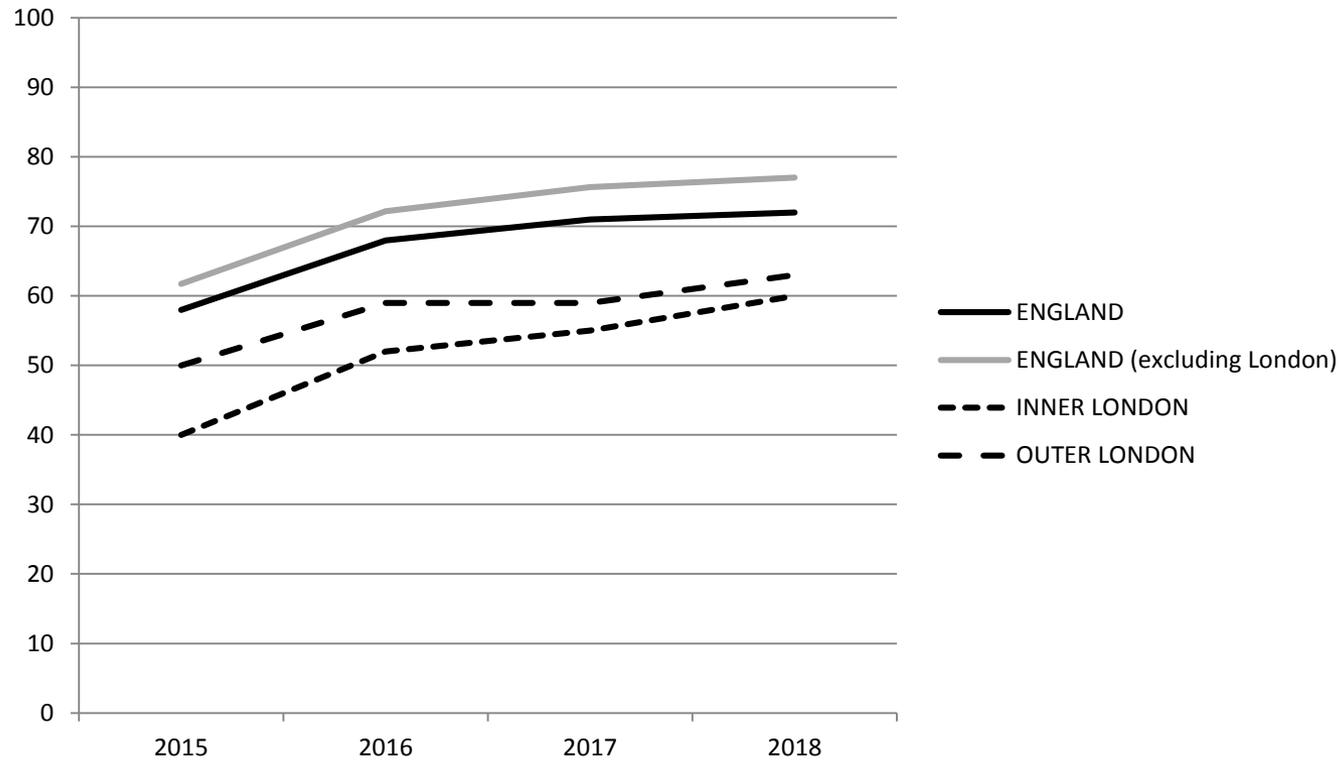
### Background

- In England, all 3 and 4 year olds, and disadvantaged 2 year olds (whose families meet certain eligibility criteria), are entitled to free part-time early education of 15 hours per week during term time
- London has the lowest take-up of both the universal entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds (84% compared with 94% nationally) and the targeted 2 year old entitlement (61% compared with 72% nationally)



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Percentage of eligible 2 year olds benefitting from FEEE, by year



Source: DfE statistics (2018) Education provision: children under 5 years of age

## London Early Years Campaign

- Target Group Analysis (GLA, August 2018)
- Parents' Focus Groups (2CV, commissioned by the GLA, August 2018)
- [Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements](#) (DfE, September 2018)



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## Target Group Analysis (GLA, August 2018):

- Target group are mostly 25 – 44-year-old females
- More likely to be BAME and C2DE
- Lowest take up in Tower Hamlets, Newham, Wandsworth, Hillingdon and Barnet
- Very likely to have more than one child
- Main source of news social media, and most likely to use Facebook – 72% use at least once a day



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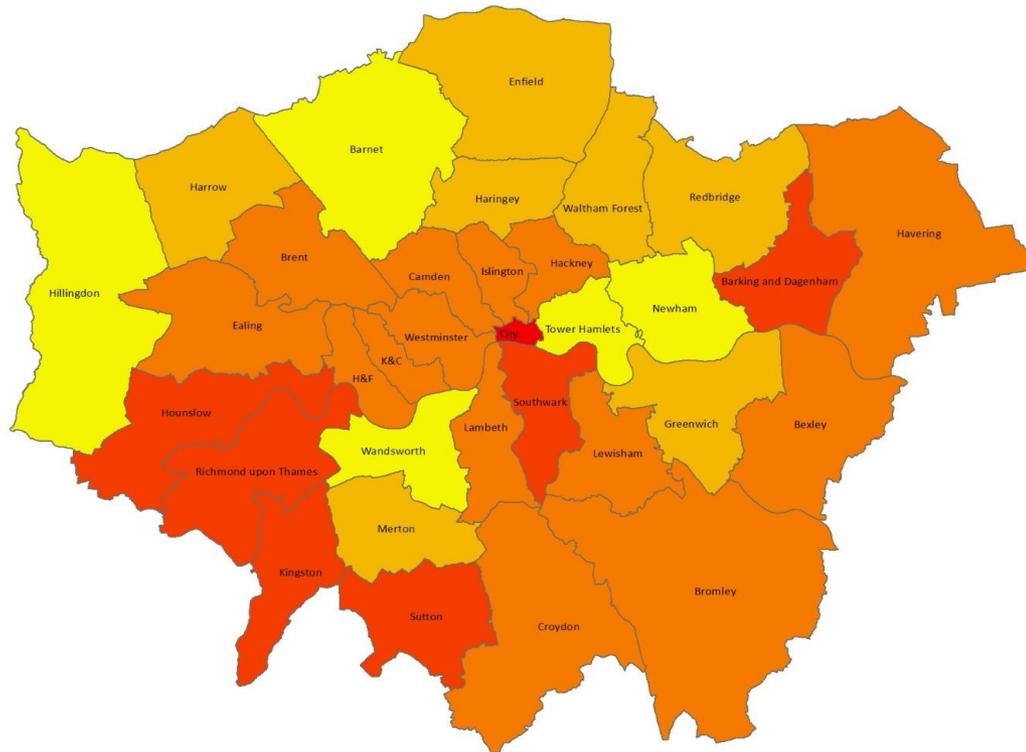
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## Target Group Analysis (GLA, August 2018):

### Household demographics:

- This group are very likely to have more than one child under 18 in household (86%) – this is most likely to be 2 children (24%), 3 children (22%) or 4 children (20%).
- 34% of this group rent privately, 21% own house with a mortgage and 14% rent from local authority.
- Just over 1 in 5 of this group are separated, single or divorced (22%) compared to 17% of all London parents with a child under 18.

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**% of take-up per borough of those entitled to early years (2 year olds)**



January 2017

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## Parents' Focus Groups (2CV, August 2018):

- Five focus groups with London mums with a child aged 1-2, aged 20-44, all eligible for free early years education and childcare offer
- Participants were recruited from across London boroughs, including those where uptake of the free scheme is lowest (Tower Hamlets, Newham, Wandsworth, Hillingdon, Barnet, Haringey, Greenwich, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Enfield, Harrow, Merton).

2 x standard focus groups with 6-8 mums from across London

Including: Tower Hamlets, Newham, Wandsworth, Hillingdon, Barnet, Haringey, Greenwich, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Enfield, Harrow, Merton



3 x mini-focus groups with 3-4 mums from BAME

1. African / Caribbean
2. South Asian
3. Eastern European

Focus group discussions covered a range of topic areas:

- Knowledge and information sources
- Experiences of childcare
- Perceptions of the free scheme
- Responses to communication examples (from local boroughs and central government)

## Parents' Focus Groups (2CV, August 2018):

Mums are open to the scheme and see the potential benefits but with extremely low awareness, the biggest hurdle is cut-through and ensuring mums are clear about what the scheme offers and who is eligible

Mums default to trusted information channels and are often influenced by other mums, family and wider cultural norms.

- **Communications must cut-through**
- **Messenger and location of messages are key**

The scheme is, in principle, welcomed but mums question their eligibility, whether the scheme will work for them and whether it will be worth the effort to find out.

- **Communications must provide clear reassurances about who can apply and what flexibility is built into the scheme**

The perception of a complicated application process can further put some mums off and any hint that they may not be rewarded for their effort can lead to opt-out.

- **Communications must stress a 'simple application process' and convey simplicity through design look and feel**

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## Parents' Focus Groups (2CV, August 2018):

Cultural contexts are relevant but family influences and norms are important too

### African-Caribbean

Close-knit families and communities, where grandparents are the first port of call and there is an expectation that the immediate family will look after the children.

### South Asian

Mums expect to spend the early years looking after their child with support from their parents and in-laws, particularly as it is common to live with their husband's parents.

### Eastern European

Children are commonly "sent away" to formal childcare settings at a very early age (e.g. under 1 years old). State provision is more extensive and use of childcare services more widespread.

### Wider family norms

*All* families have their habits and conventions, regardless of background and many mums are influenced by the suggestions and habits of those closest to them – parents, in-laws, siblings – calling on their support.

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## Parents' Focus Groups (2CV, August 2018):

Six key learnings to inform the development of future communications

01

Placement of message is as important as content. Communications must catch mums' attention by being positioned in the right place/delivered by the right channel. Use places mums will be in!

02

A simple, direct message that clearly states what the scheme is and reassures mums about who is eligible is likely to engage the biggest audience

03

More detailed communications must give clear and easy to understand information to avoid the risk of mums opting out and ignoring their formal options

04

Bright colours and a childish look and feel attract attention and signal to mums that the message is something related to young children

05

Initial messages should also stress a 'simple application process' to overcome the perceptions of faff that deter some from applying

06

Mention of income support/benefits/tax credits must make crystal clear what each is and who exactly is eligible. Much confusion exists, with some unsure what they receive

## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

**LA area-level factors that predict take-up rates:**

Lower take-up rates of 2 year old entitlement predicted by higher proportions of children with EAL



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: parental barriers

#### 1. Simply not knowing about the free entitlements:

*“I think that sounds great. I've been struggling with my kids for the past couple of years trying to keep them occupied at home.”* (Parent of eligible 3 year old, Outer London, unaware of entitlement)

*“I think it's absolutely amazing. That would definitely help me out a lot and it would help out my family and friends as well as I wouldn't have to rely on them so much.”* (Parent of eligible 2 year old, Inner London, unaware of entitlement)



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: parental barriers

#### 2. Misconceptions about the eligibility criteria:

Mistakenly thinking they were not eligible because they were working/not working, not receiving benefits, or due to their child's age

#### 3. Difficulties with the application process:

Lack of IT and literacy/English language skills to complete an online application form independently, requiring in-person support

Difficulty in providing necessary information such as NI numbers

#### 4. Lack of available places within travelling distance



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: parental barriers

5. Number of free hours perceived as insufficient to support employment/training:

- *“I am aware that Working Tax Credit doesn't kick in until you work 16 hours, so for him to only be in childcare for 15 hours and then I've still got to travel to and from a place of work, I don't think that would work for me just now”*  
(Parent of eligible 2 year old, Inner London, unaware of entitlement)
- Topping up the 15 hours per week would be the only option for some parents but was not seen as financially viable

6. Other cost concerns including having to pay for extras, travel costs to and from the provider, charges for late collection



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: Parental concerns and constraints:

1. Some parents were not convinced of the benefits of formal early education:

- *“I don't really see much benefit. I don't think there's much they'd be able to understand that early.”*  
(Parent of eligible 2 year old, Inner London, unaware of entitlement)
- *“As long as you're teaching them the right things at home, [like] the alphabet, how to talk... you're giving them the same learning.”*  
(Parent of eligible 3 year old, Outer London, aware of entitlement)



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: Parental concerns and constraints:

2. Some non-working parents did not see the need for formal childcare while they were not working, which influenced their decision not to take up FEEE

3. Some parents were anxious about trusting “strangers” to look after their child and many raised issues about safety:

*“They've got so many other children to look after sometimes they do lose track of one child. Or they've taken them out and then the child goes wandering off. I'm just frightened.”*

(Parent of eligible 3 year old, Outer London, aware of entitlement)

4. Some parents assumed that because the entitlement was free, the care would be of poorer quality



## Take-up of Free Early Education Entitlements (DfE, September 2018)

### Qualitative findings: Parental concerns and constraints:

5. Parents of 2 year olds had concerns related to the higher level of support they would need at that age, such as:

- Vigilant **supervision** to prevent them hurting themselves
- **Potty training**: some parents were uncomfortable with nursery staff changing their child's nappy, concerned about whether they would be changed promptly, and/or had questions about how providers would approach potty training
- **Speech and communication**: concerns that their child would not be able to express their needs to providers or talk to their parents about their experiences afterwards
- Some mentioned greater **emotional impact of separation** at age 2



## London Early Years Campaign

Two strands:

- Social Media Marketing Campaign
- Small grants round

Timeline:

January 2019 – September 2019



## London Early Years Campaign

### Aim:

To increase awareness of the free entitlement for 2-year-olds and its impact on children's outcomes. It will target families and communities who are currently missing out on this vital early education offer and whose children benefit most from early years learning.



## London Early Years Campaign

### Small Grants:

The Mayor is offering a total of £150,000 to improve awareness of free early education for 2-year-olds and increase take up of places by eligible families.

Through the **London Early Years Campaign – small grants** we will provide **a maximum of 30 grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 each** to local projects that promote awareness of and engagement in free early education for 2-year-olds.

The campaign will target London families and communities who are currently missing out on this vital offer and whose children may benefit most from early learning.

## London Early Years Campaign

### Objectives:

- Pilot creative and innovative approaches to engaging families, which result in improved awareness and take-up of free early education for 2-year-olds
- Improve joint working between community groups, early years providers and local authorities.
- Improve the capacity and knowledge of the sector and create legacy for future activities.



## London Early Years Campaign

Organisations must have excellent links with local communities and understanding of barriers to take up of early learning specific to those communities.

We expect applicants to have strong links with:

- their respective local authorities in order to understand their local childcare market
- their local early years providers in order to provide families with access to a childcare place
- community groups working with and/or representing chosen target groups

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## London Early Years Campaign – small grants Application timeline

Milestone	Deadline (Provisional)
Request for Proposals published	w/c 15 October 2018
Closing date for tender responses	Friday 30 November 2018
GLA shortlisting	3 - 7 December 2018
Appoint	Week commencing 10 December 2018
Successful organisations to hold initiation meeting with the GLA	December 2018
Signing of grant agreements	December 2018
GLA funding commences	January 2019
GLA funding ends	September 2019
Updates to the GLA on progress	Mid-project report April 2019 and end of project report – September 2019

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**Questions  
&  
Answers**